

REMARKS

It is noted, with appreciation, that the Examiner has indicated that claims 15-20 have been allowed and that claims 4-9 and 11-19, although objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by Walsh et al., U.S. Patent 6,497,121. Also, claims 3 and 10 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walsh et al. in view of Japan '405 (Japan 5-115405). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The present invention is directed to a washing machine into which external air is introduced in a dehydration mode whereby a small quantity of the laundry can be introduced to initial drying without the application of any additional drying means, for example, a drying pipe, or a heater. According to the present invention, the door of the washing machine is provided with air suction ports for drawing external air into the drum of the washing machine and in addition, means are provided for opening and closing the air suction ports installed in the door of the washing machine. As the Examiner will note, original claims 1, 3, 4, 7 and 9 have been cancelled from the present application and accordingly, the Applicant is focusing on the subject matter of original claim 10 which contains the feature that means are provided for opening and closing the air suction ports disposed in the door of the washing machine.

The Walsh et al. reference, U.S. Patent 6,497,121B1 is relied upon by the Examiner to show an air-circulation enhancer for use with a clothes washing machine. The Examiner relies upon the Walsh et al. patent to show the presence of air suction ports 96 for drawing external air into the drum of the washing machine. However, the Walsh et al. patent does not disclose or even remotely suggest the use of means for opening and closing the air suction ports provided in the door of the washing machine.

The Examiner, recognizing the deficiency in the Walsh et al. patent has further relied upon the Japan '405 reference to disclose an opening means which is used in a washing machine. The Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art

to modify the device of the Walsh et al. patent to include means for opening the ports for the purpose of controlling air flow. However, the opening means utilized in the Japanese reference is not for the purpose of controlling air flow but rather to prevent washing water from being scattered to the outside when the door of the washing machine is opened. Thus, as can be seen by referring to the Abstract of the Japanese reference, a movable cover 3 is attached to the operating port 2a of the door 2 so as to be freely openable and closeable, and a micro switch 5 is provided for detecting the switching of the cover to an open state for stopping the spouting of washing water contained in the washing tank of the washing machine. Since the entire purpose of the opening means disclosed in the Japanese reference is completely different from that of the present invention, that is, preventing washing water from being scattered to the outside when the door is open rather than for the purpose of controlling the circulation of drying air, one skilled in the art, with the references before him, would not be led to utilizing the opening means disclosed in the Japanese reference for controlling the circulation of drying air in the manner defined by the present invention. Since the Japanese reference does not recognize the Applicant's problem, but in fact, is directed to the solution of a different problem, one skilled in the art would not be led to the teachings of the Japanese reference to solve the totally different problem as defined by the present invention, that is, controlling the quantity of external air which is introduced in a dehydration mode into the washing machine so as to facilitate the drying of the laundry contained therein without the application of additional drying devices such as a drying pipe or a heater. The only way in which the Examiner can combine the references as suggested in the Office Action letter is with hindsight and in view of the Applicant's own disclosure.

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all of the claims of the present application are respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Joseph A. Kolasch Reg. No. 22,463 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

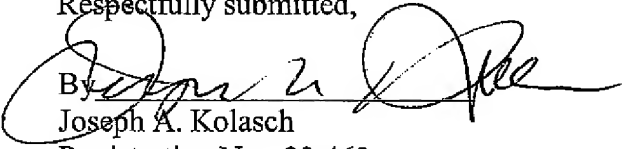
Application No. 10/730,087
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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: February 9, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By 
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